

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL PEER GUIDE CO-ORDINATORS

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for the Peer Guide Scheme and the Guidelines for Peer Guides and Potential Peer Guides. It is possible to download more ideas and examples of good practice from the Peer Guide Co-ordinator area of 'MyBangor.'

1. Background Information

These guidelines are specific to staff designated to work on the Peer Guide Scheme. Each school will have at least one member of staff allocated to this role. However, some will allocate extra, normally an academic member of staff to lead with someone else to support them, often from the administrative staff.

The staff designated to work on the Peer Guide Scheme will recruit and manage a cohort of Peer Guides to help new undergraduate students make the transition to Bangor University. This will be done with the support of the Peer Support Co-ordinator who manages the Peer Guide Scheme across the institution.

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.

Recruitment of Peer Guides

It is the responsibility of each school to work with the central co-ordinator to recruit the number of Peer Guides needed and to ensure sure those who apply are suitable.

School co-ordinators should:

- aim to recruit 1 Peer Guide for every 5 new students.
- distribute and display recruitment information.
- encourage potential new applicants to attend one of the centrally held information sessions.
- advise potential new applicants on the commitment expected of Peer Guides, particularly those who do not attend a centrally held session.
- observe Peer Guides in action and invite those considered effective to return to the scheme.
- check the lists of potential Peer Guides - inform the central co-ordinator of any considered unsuitable and confirm acceptance of those thought suitable.
- be selective - sometimes it is better to have slightly fewer rather than accepting unsuitable applicants.
- remind applicants of the need to book and attend Peer Guide training.

To help you in this the Peer Support Co-ordinator will:

- distribute all relevant information to school co-ordinators and students as appropriate.
- run centrally held information sessions for potential new First Time Peer Guide applicants detailing what is expected of all Peer Guides.

- make on-line application forms available for both First Time and Senior Peer Guides.
- call in a reference* for each First Time Peer Guide.
- check the university's disciplinary records of applicants.
- provide recruitment and selection guidance as needed.
- Inform school co-ordinators of unsuitable applicants and in liaison with them manage the refusal process. Such refusals based on the central procedures would involve the receipt of a bad reference or on the advice of the university's disciplinary officers when checking potential Peer Guides' disciplinary records
- Advise and support school co-ordinators on the refusal of new applicants or withdrawal of current Peer Guides should issues arise or be known about within the academic school. This would include anything that indicates: their unsuitability to commit fully to the role; behaviour that would make them unsuitable to be entrusted to support others; behaviour that suggests they would not be a good role model and ambassador for the university; personal issues whereby taking on the role might be detrimental to their studies or well-being.
- keep School Co-ordinators informed of potential Peer Guides and their progress with the procedures.
- manage the mandatory training of all new Peer Guides.
- manage the optional training of Senior Peer Guides.

In order to aid selective recruitment we suggest you consider adopting some or even all of the following strategies:

- hold internal recruitment information sessions aimed at new applicants detailing how the scheme is operated within the school.
- particularly encourage applications from students you feel show the necessary personal qualities.
- check the students' tutorial and any other records held within the school
- seek the opinions of relevant staff in the school both for encouraging applications and for checking lists supplied by the central co-ordinator. This is particularly important if your role does not bring you into contact with potential applicants.
- use reliable current Peer Guides to help recruit potential new applicants.
- set up an internal application process whereby you actively select the best applicants.
- hold review sessions during the autumn to help assess the effectiveness of current Peer Guides with a view to recruitment of Senior Peer Guides.

Once the recruitment process is complete the Peer Support Co-ordinator will inform you of who is available to help as a Peer Guide.

2. Implementing an effective Welcome Week Programme

The School Co-ordinator is responsible for allocating roles and duties to the Peer Guides in order to support the School's Induction Programme. This work is often more of a facilitator role undertaken with support from colleagues and, in the schools that appoint them, Lead Peer Guides.

School Co-ordinators should:

- plan a range of School social events to supplement the School's formal induction programme.
- allocate each Peer Guide a small group of about 5 incoming students to welcome - or if you prefer to work the Peer Guides in pairs allocate 10 incoming students to 2 Peer Guides.
- facilitate pre-arrival contact between the Peer Guides and the incoming students.**
- allocate Peer Guides to help with the formal School induction sessions
- allocate a Peer Guide to be a phone contact for the Peer Support Co-ordinator over the Arrival Weekend.
- hold a Peer Guide meeting immediately before Arrival Weekend to distribute to each Peer Guide:
 - Peer Guide Handbook.
 - Peer Guide T shirt.
 - Halls of Residence details for their group of incoming students.
 - School Welcome Week Programme and their allocated sessions.
 - Any other School based information necessary eg change of module options, new handbook etc.
- meet Peer Guides during Welcome Week to monitor progress, check they are not being faced with issues beyond their role and to remind them to offer support beyond Welcome Week. ***
- continue to meet and support Peer Guides beyond Welcome Week as needed.
- support and advise Peer Guides and incoming students on issues connected to Peer Guiding.

To help you implement an effective Welcome Week the Peer Support Co-ordinator will:

- Distribute instructions to enable you to download the Halls of Residence room details prior to Arrival Weekend.
- Ensure Peer Guide T shirts and handbooks are delivered to you in time for Arrival Weekend.
- Offer advice and guidance if needed.

In order to implement a successful Peer Guide programme we suggest you consider adopting some or even all of the following strategies:

- hold a social / group forming event for the Peer Guides so they get to know each other and work better as a group.
- provide school specific information and / or training sessions to make sure the Peer Guides are aware of Welcome Week arrangements and what information the new students have received, particularly emphasising aspects that have changed since the previous year.
- plan Welcome Week during the summer term so that details can be circulated prior to the summer vacation and encourage Peer Guides to

help with this - it motivates them, allows them to develop more employability skills and adds the student perspective on the success (or otherwise) of the events.

- plan social activities that account for the diversity of the student intake and provide a range of activities that will appeal to all. We particularly encourage events that take the focus off alcohol and / or extend a welcome to the breadth of student diversity. This is especially important for particular categories of students such as International Students, Mature Students, Joint Honours Students and Local Students.
- keep Peer Guides updated with any alterations or extra details during the summer vacation.
- offer the Senior Peer Guides extra responsibility; they can be a useful source of information and support for both you and the First Time Peer Guides.
- distribute a Peer Guide information sheet or booklet for incoming students. This could include details of how the scheme operates in your school, coordinator details, Peer Guide events and small profiles of the Peer Guides.
- establish and encourage the use of good communications to enable Peer Guides to contact each other as well as the new students for example:
 - a notice board or pigeon holes within the School for Peer Guide use.
 - a manned Peer Guide information point or room.
 - a Peer Guide mobile phone which is carried by one of the Peer Guides on a rota system at all times (this gives Peer Guides the option to not give out personal phone numbers if they do not wish to).
 - a Peer Guide facebook page which is only open to Peer Guides and incoming students.

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 or look at the information on 'insideBangor'.

Notes

*Applicants are asked to provide referee details for persons external to the university except in the case of some International Students where it is difficult to obtain suitable character references. In these cases it is possible to name staff within the academic school. For more guidance on this please contact the central Peer Support Co-ordinator.

** This can be done by letter, email or phone as soon as places are confirmed. The Record Management team has confirmed there are no problems concerning the release of personal contact details to Peer Guides because:

- all new students are informed of the scheme and have the chance to opt out

- all Peer Guides are referenced and trained - confidentiality is covered in training
- Peer Guides are reminded when entrusted with details that they are for Peer Guide purposes only

*** 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 difficult cases to appropriate staff as is highlighted at training.