

MEET - UP: AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP STUDENT SKILLS

What is Meet – Up?

Meet – Up (previously known as PALS) is a USQ developed peer mentoring program that is course based. Students who have been successful in their studies in a course are selected and trained by the Meet - Up team to be student leaders. These leaders then conduct sessions, face-to-face or electronically, to help other students learn course content and study techniques. The Meet - Up program has evolved from experiences with student mentoring in Australian universities, a commitment to academic participation in mentoring programs, and the US-based Supplemental Instruction program.

How can I use Meet - Up in my course?

Meet – Up sessions are designed by a team consisting of the course lecturer, the Meet – Up coordinator and the student leaders. As a lecturer, you can assist student leaders to develop activities that focus on some of the academic skills that are essential for successful student learning in your course, as well as help develop the graduate skills targeted by your course assessment. All activities are designed to be informal and interactive.

Graduate Skill	Academic Skill	Activity
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing questions Critical analysis of case studies or scenarios Interpreting /critiquing maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenarios or problems prepared by the lecturer and/or the student leader that students work on in groups or pairs
Academic and professional literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient reading Critical reading Identifying main points in lectures and /or text Organising ideas and concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders share their tips on how to study the course Discussion on how to find appropriate material for an assignment or other task Debate on appropriateness or usefulness of texts for a particular assignment or other task
Written and oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing in different forms Preparing oral presentation Presenting oral presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of assignment plans Preparation of group response Presentation of group response
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being member of a group Being the leader or a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any activity on course content that involves collaboration between students, including student reflection on their role in the group process.

How do I engage my on-campus students with Meet - Up?

The Meet - Up program is flexible and sessions may be tailored to the requirements of both lecturer and students. Sessions can be announced via course materials, messages in lectures, or on study desk where student leaders can be active and visible to students. They attend lectures to promote the program and reacquaint themselves with the course content. They also give timetable details and announce what the sessions will cover in the following week/s. Sessions can be held:

- regularly eg weekly or fortnightly; during the day or in the evening
- any required number of times during the semester eg three times

- at Toowoomba and Springfield campuses and at the Sydney Centre

How do I engage my distance education students with Meet - Up?

Meet - Up sessions can support distance students too. Meet - Up is responding to the increasing demand for and availability of electronic media. Leaders can now be trained to take sessions using Wimba technology for domestic and off shore students. The sessions are held in real time and can be recorded for students for whom the technology or their time zone precludes attendance. Sessions can be held:

- face-to-face at Springfield, Toowoomba and the Sydney Centre
- via Wimba

Who are the student leaders and what's in it for them?

Leaders are students who have previously studied the course and received a grade of B or better. They can be selected by lecturers or past leaders. They are interviewed and then trained by LTSU staff in techniques that facilitate collaboration, develop learning skills that students will need, as well as promote an understanding of course concepts. Training also encourages leaders to share their personal study experiences with other students. The program benefits leaders by developing their skills in leadership, confidence, team work, and group facilitation. It also enhances their understanding of their discipline and its concepts.



Student feedback: Yes they were very helpful, in understanding concepts as well as handy little tips for remembering and understanding how to work which formulae goes with which question.

Leader feedback: Sessions are a way to give guidance in how to study the course, tackle assignments and revision techniques; a way of obtaining clarification on course work in addition to that supplied by lecturers

Student feedback: Yes, interaction with other students does help a lot. It identifies where you are in regards to others, but also you can talk in the same language (laymen's terms).



Lecturer feedback: Students receive the message that we are trying to be supportive and are providing as much assistance as we possibly can.

Contact

To include Meet - Up in your course or to find out more about it, please contact the Meet - Up Program Coordinator Lindy Kimmins via email kimminsl@usq.edu.au , or phone ext 1682

Information for students can be found at: <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/workshops/Meet - Up.htm>

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